ASCETICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE
MEDIATOR DEI

INTRODUCTION: The term “ascetical” taken in its broader meaning, as embracing the entire spiritual striving of the Christian.

I. Mediator’s definition of liturgy immediately makes clear the basic relation of liturgy and asceticism.
   (a) Clear also from relation of Mediator Dei to the Mystici Corporis.
   (b) Apparent especially in treatment of the Eucharist-Mass.
   (c) Also of the Liturgical Year.
   (d) Hence purpose of the “liturgical movement” (cf. Pius X).

II. Perhaps greatest contribution of Mediator Dei is that it “personalizes” the sacraments.
   (a) Not just “means of grace,” but the saving activity of Christ.
   (b) Cf. our definition of “sacraments.”
   (c) Cf. St. Thomas’ treatment.

III. Sacraments—the foundation of the life of virtue; agere sequitur esse; else we might as well be in the Old Testament.
   (a) Basic is the “imitatio” of Christ’s passion and resurrection in signo, especially in the Eucharist. (Cf. St. Cyril of Jerusalem.)
   (b) Also in each of the other sacraments.
   (c) Historical “separation”; danger of anthropocentrism in pressing the “sacramenta propter homines” axiom. E contra, cf. Ps. Denys.
   (d) Advantages in practice: unity, wholeness.

IV. Liturgy and personal effort.
   (a) Principles laid down in Mediator Dei’s treatment of relation of liturgy to private devotions.
   (b) “Let everything therefore have its proper place and arrangement; let everything be ‘theocentric’ so to speak.”

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